



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA



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The relevance of sensory information in destination marketing

The role of experiential marketing on the
creation of destination personality

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by

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Resumo

A presente dissertação tem como objetivo explorar a relação entre marketing experiencial e a personalidade de destinos turísticos, procurando também conhecer a sua a repercussão no comportamento do turista.

Apesar da existência de estudos sobre a componente sensorial da experiência turística, a parte afetiva e emocional da mesma é ainda é uma área a ser explorada. Assim, com o objetivo de abordar esta falha, o presente estudo introduz uma nova variável, que é emersão de emoções, propondo que esta é o resultado da exposição ao marketing sensorial, afetando igualmente a criação da personalidade de destinos turísticos e comportamentos futuros do consumidor.

Em primeiro lugar, é apresentada a revisão da literatura, onde os conceitos de marketing sensorial, emersão de emoções, personalidade de destinos turísticos e intenções de comportamento são expostos. Posteriormente, de acordo com o estudo por Souiden et al. (2017) sobre o papel que a personalidade de destinos turísticos desempenha na previsão de comportamentos futuros, a escala usada pelos autores na variável de personalidade foi adaptada, assim como outras escalas validadas por diferentes autores, com o intuito de desenvolver um questionário online. Aos inquiridos, foi-lhes pedido que vissem um vídeo sensorial sobre Espanha e que respondessem a uma série de questões, com o objetivo de analisar as suas respostas a estes estímulos sensoriais à posteriori.

Os resultados foram consistentes com a literatura existente, e as hipóteses propostas foram também confirmadas, provando assim que as emoções despoletadas pelo marketing experiencial influenciam a criação da personalidade de destinos turísticos, determinado também as intenções de comportamento do consumidor.

Palavras-chave: marketing sensorial; marketing experiencial; personalidade de destinos turísticos; emersão de emoções; estímulos sensoriais; experiência turística.

Abstract

This study aims to understand the relationship between experiential marketing and destination personality and their further impact on tourist behavioural intentions. A few variables are introduced, which are believed to be mediators in the relationship between sensory marketing and destination's personality.

Past studies have studied how destination image dictates consumer behaviour, while others focused on the sensory dimension of tourists' experience, however, most neglected the affective and emotional side of this construct. The present study addresses this shortcoming and introduces emotional arousal as a result from the exposure of sensory marketing. Furthermore, the destination's personality is analysed as a resulting outcome of emotions.

Firstly, a literature review is presented, where sensory marketing, emotional arousal, destination personality and behavioural intentions are introduced as variables under study. Subsequently, following the work of Souiden et al. (2017) on the role of destination personality on behavioural intentions, the used scale on destination personality was adapted, as well as other previously validated scales, with the objective to conduct an online survey. Respondents were presented with a sensory video of Spain and a set of questions using different measurement scales in order to understand their response after exposure to sensory stimuli.

Findings were consistent with existing literature and the purposed hypothesis were confirmed, proving that emotional arousal plays a mediator role between experiential marketing and the creation of destination personality. Moreover, destination personality proves to positively affect behavioural intentions.

Key words: sensory marketing; experiential marketing; destination personality, emotional arousal; sensory stimuli; tourist experience

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
RESUMO	V
ABSTRACT	VII
CONTENTS.....	IX
FIGURES INDEX.....	XI
TABLE INDEX	XIII
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2- LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	3
2.1. EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING	4
2.2. SENSORY MARKETING	6
2.3. SENSORY STIMULI.....	8
2.3.1. VISUAL STIMULI.....	9
2.3.2. AUDITORY STIMULI	10
2.4. EMOTION AROUSAL	11
2.5. DESTINATION PERSONALITY	12
2.6. BEHAVIOUR INTENTIONS	14
CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES.....	17
3.1. CONCEPTUAL MODEL	17
3.2. THE STUDY CONTEXT	18
3.3. QUESTIONNAIRE AND MEASUREMENT SCALES.....	19
3.3.1. VISUAL AND ACOUSTIC PERCEPTIONS	22
3.3.2. EMOTIONAL AROUSAL	23
3.3.3. DESTINATION PERSONALITY	24
3.3.4. BEHAVIOUR INTENTIONS	25

3.4. DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE25

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS.....29

4.1. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS29

4.2. EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (EFA)31

4.3. REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON AMOS33

4.4. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS.....36

CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS.....39

REFERENCES43

APPENDIXES55

APPENDIX 1 – TRANSLATION OF THE ONLINE SURVEY IN PORTUGUESE55

Figures Index

Figure 1 - Theoretical Framework.....	18
Figure 2 - SEM Results.....	34

Table Index

Table 1- Variables and Measurement Scales.....	20
Table 2 - Demographic Profiles (N = 199)	26
Table 3 - Descriptive measures	29
Table 4 - Final Constructs of Destination Personality	32
Table 5 - Reliability of Variable Constructs	33
Table 6 – P Values and Variables.....	36

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The tourism sector has been experiencing a boom over the past few years (Forbes, 2018). As in this year, Tourism and Travel accounts for 10,4% of the global GDP with 1/10 jobs being created by this sector (WTTC, 2018). Additionally, data provided by tourism organizations highlights the conspicuous importance of research in this field, as it becomes clear that all stakeholders, both tourists and service providers, would profit from a clear understanding of the tourist behaviour (Juvan, Omerzel, & Maravić, 2017).

Nowadays, consumers aim for higher levels of personalization and for uniqueness in the services they purchase. Sung, et al., 2016 emphasize the competitive environment of the tourism industry by discussing the omnivore paradox, which consists of the idea that consumers prefer both familiarity and novelty. Therefore, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) should aim to achieve competitive advantage by exceeding the consumers' expectations and offering them a unique product (Kim & Park, 2017).

Millennials are a predominant and growing market segment in the tourism industry (Cohen, et al., 2014). Born between 1982 and 2002, they prioritize their emotions over reason when it comes to the final purchase decision (Forbes, 2018). Thus, the concern of DMOs should be on staging memorable experiences (Tung & Ritchie, 2011), while focusing more on their emotional quality (Coelho, et al., 2018).

This idea of enhancing the tourist experience by engaging the human senses in the process (Agapito, Valle, & Mendes, 2014; Ghosh & Sarkar, 2016; Jamaluddin, Hanafiah, & Zulkifly, 2013; Pine II & Gilmore, 1998; Soars, 2009; Wanivenhaus, 2015) relates to the concept introduced by Pines II & Gilmore (1998) of *experience economy*. Tourists are in the search of new sensations and authentic experiences that bring a sense of exclusivity and new exciting feelings (Ketter, 2018). Pines and Gilmore (1999) argue that “experience is the marketing”, sustaining the idea that service providers can use marketing to stage an

experience by appealing to the tourist imagination, and turning that into a memorable event (Hosany & Prayag, 2013; Prayag, et al., 2013; Servidio & Ruffolo, 2016; Zatori, et al., 2018).

However, studies on experiential marketing lack empirical evidence on sensory marketing and, particularly, on the relationship between the use of sensorial cues in destination communication and the creation of destination personality. Furthermore, and despite the extensive body of research on the experience concept, not many studies consider the part the human senses play in the tourist experience and their impact on the development of emotions (Meiselman, 2016b). Therefore, this study aims to address this research gap by bringing new insights on how destinations' personality is formed and its impact on tourist's purchase intentions, which leads to the purposed research questions:

RQ1: How does experiential marketing affects the creation of destination personality?

RQ2: How does destination personality affect behavioural intentions?

With the objective to address these shortcomings, the present dissertation presents a thoroughly grounded literature review, as well as the research model that will guide the data collection process. The study was developed using an online survey, based on a structured questionnaire, including an online destination video advertisement. The questionnaire included a set of questions that allowed us to measure the variables under study, based on previously validated measurement scales. We collected 199 complete and valid responses, and data were in-depth analysed in order to respond to the purposed research questions. The analysis of the results allowed us to present relevant suggestions and recommendations regarding the development of destination marketing strategy. Lastly, the limitations of the present study along with suggestions for future studies are presented.

Chapter 2- Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Experiential marketing has been at the centre of incurring discussions within different fields of research, one of them being the tourism industry. As most authors believe it will be the future marketing strategy for most companies, this (new) approach defends that offering an experience instead of a service or a product enhances the brand equity – an idea that traces back to a theory most philosophers stand by: that affect, and emotions are, indeed, experiences that determine our actions (Schmitt, 2010). In fact, experiential marketing aims to include the consumer in the development of his/her own experience, by allowing the consumer to guide his/her own brand experience. With no doubt, experiential marketing revolutionized the meaning of *consumption* and challenged the idea that the consumer had an exclusively passive role.

It is based on this premise that the present literature review was developed, aiming to clarify the role of experiential marketing in the development of the tourist experience, while studying also the impact of emotional arousal and destination personality on tourists' responses to destinations.

Despite the development of previous studies on these concepts, there is a clear lack of empirical research concerning the tourism field, as the focus of most research was on other fields. Moreover, within the domain of experiential marketing, there is still the need to develop empirical studies that focus on sensory marketing and on the role emotions play in the tourist decision-making.

Firstly, the concepts of experiential marketing and sensory marketing are analysed in-depth, following a discussion regarding the two most important senses in online destination promotion: vision and audition. Subsequently, an important moderator variable of this study is introduced, that is emotional arousal. Furthermore, when analysing the concept of destination personality, we also discuss the critical role that emotions play in the creation of destination personality, and finally, how this all translates into future behavioural intentions.

2.1. Experiential Marketing

According to Schmitt's (2010, p. 60), the consumer experience is composed of "perceptions, feelings and thoughts that consumers have when they encounter products and brands in the marketplace and engage in consumption activities – as well as memories of such experiences".

As discussed in the Introduction, industrialization introduced a new reality to the marketing field: the experience economy. Prior to this modern era, consumption was perceived as a way to satisfy immediate and simple needs (Alagöz & Ekici, 2014), with campaigns and promotions solely built on stressing the products' unique attributes (Simon Hudson and J.R. Brent Ritchie 2008). At this time, consumers were only looking for the functional value of products and identified them only as means to an end. Later, experiential marketing emerges and introduces an improved way of targeting consumers to the market: by recognizing them as emotional and rational beings (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2015; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Hudson & Ritchie, 2009; Servidio & Ruffolo, 2016), who long for more than to simply satisfy a basic need.

In fact, with the evolution of the economy and of technology, consumers are faced with more options and become more demanding. They start wanting to take active participation in the branding process and to feel in-charge of the construction of their own experience, seeing this as an opportunity to re-create themselves and express their true identity (Agapito & Lacerda, 2014). Consequently, the thought of what the *brand* represents starts to be challenged and the formerly constructed belief that the *brand* serves as an ID (Schmitt, 1999) gives place to the pioneering idea that the brand is actually an experience, "a source of sensory, affective, and cognitive associations that result in memorable and rewarding branding experiences" (Schmitt, 1999, p. 57).

In the literature on brand experience, two different approaches can be found. Some authors defend that there are different types and dimensions of the same experience (sense, feel, think, act, relate) (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009), while others (e.g. Alagöz & Ekici (2014) in their study on tourism brand

experience), suggest that consumption is a holistic experience. Moreover, Hultén (2011) defends that consumers are co-creators of the brand value and are the guides to their own personal experience (Li, Robinson, & Oriade, 2017; Österle, et al., 2018). Despite the level of (dis)agreement between these theories, all comply with the role the consumer plays in the development of the brand. In fact, these authors acknowledge the subjective character of the brand experience and the active involvement, at the emotional and sensorial level, it requires from the consumer.

As a matter of fact, for the tourism industry, destinations are brands and experiential marketing is the best approach for DMOs (Destination Marketing Organizations) (Österle et al., 2018). By implementing this improved marketing strategy to this particular industry, marketers confer destinations the tangibility they lack and elevate the future experience to a new level. Experiential marketing displays the vehicle for telling the story of the destination (Schmitt, 2010) while staging its environment and stimulating a possible future experience. Not only does it leave place to imagination, but it facilitates brand associations too. Hence, after being exposed to an add about a destination, the consumer starts creating this image about the destination (favourable or not) and expectations arise (Yuan & Wu, 2008), then emotions take control and a bond is created with that place (Agapito, Valle, & Mendes, 2012).

In sum, this process grants DMOs the ability to enhance communication with the consumer, transforming the passive role of the tourist into an active one by setting the ground for favourable interactions and consequently arousing emotions and positive behaviour responses, as sensations are far more important in the development of brand loyalty than reasoning (Same & Larimo, 2013).

2.2. Sensory marketing

Schmitt (1999) was the pioneer in the discussion of experiential marketing, as he challenged the formerly accepted idea that consumers make purchase decisions based on pure reasoning. The author believed and proved that “consumers look for marketing campaigns that dazzle their senses, touch their hearts, and stimulate their minds” (Schmitt, 1999, p.57). In his research papers, he introduced the 5 Strategic Experiential Modules: sense, feel, think, act and relate. Which are essentially five different types of experience that destination organizations should aim to implement with the objective to create holistic experiences. Therefore, the present literature review focuses on two of the five modules: sense – creating a unique sensory experience – and feel – appealing to feelings to create an extraordinary affective experience that induce positive moods and strong emotions.

Following this line of thought, several authors discuss the importance of using sensory marketing and the five senses to promote destinations (Agapito & Lacerda, 2014; Roopchand Randhir, et al., 2016; Schmitt, 2010; Wiedmann, et al., 2018). As consumers, we register a brand in our memory as a set of images, which are not only visual, but rather a mix of sounds, tastes, textures and smells (Damásio, 2011; Pawaskar & Goel, 2014). We then use this sensory information to assign meaning to our experiences (Haase & Wiedmann, 2018; Jamaluddin et al., 2013; Pentz & Gerber, 2013; Prescott, 2017; Soars, 2009), and therefore sensory stimuli can create top-of-mind associations and long-lasting impressions (Ghosh & Sarkar, 2016).

However, DMOs are mostly limited to promotion on online channels, which limits consumers' interactions with the brand (Li et al., 2017). Despite these constraints, when exposed to sensory stimuli, even online, our limbic system (the one responsible for emotions) (Glazer, 2018; Sung et al., 2016) is activated due to a process called perceptual re-enactment. Consumers can infer sensory expectations simply by being exposed to images and/or sounds, filling out any missing features that are not physically present at the time of exposure (Petit et

al., 2019). Therefore, by presenting a picture of a certain food, e.g., mental images of the product's texture, smell or flavour, brands can enhance the consumer's evaluation of that item.

Subsequently, the goal of marketers is to build that "immersive and enjoyable experience for consumers (Petit et al., 2019, p. 43) and to conquer a place in their minds (Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011). Following the work of Qu et al. (2011), we highlight the conspicuous importance of focusing destination marketing in points of difference, i.e., the distinctive elements that represent the destination. In fact, DMOs should intent to place the destination in a superior place within its product category, aiming to match the identity created by marketers with the image the consumer has of the destination (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Jamaluddin et al., 2013; Souiden, et al., 2017).

On the other hand, destinations are a holistic product (Agapito et al., 2014; Haase & Wiedmann, 2018; Stylos, Bellou, Andronikidis, & Vassiliadis, 2017; Wanivenhaus, 2015) and communication to the consumer should emphasize this trait, while taking advantage of it. Destinations are both the mix and the outcome of a set of activities happening on-site (Qu et al., 2011), a combination of the emotions and feelings triggered by the all these experiences. Accordingly, destination promotion should appeal to the consumers' senses and stimulate brand loyalty (Rupini & Nandagopal, 2015), considering that our experience is based on our senses and that the destination's personality is created based on our experience.

In summary, the five human senses have a strong impact in our emotions by influencing our buying perception and brand loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009; Jamaluddin et al., 2013). Frequently, we rely on them to make decisions, as "almost our entire understanding of the world is experienced through our senses" (Roopchund Randhir et al., 2016, p. 279).

2.3. Sensory Stimuli

As previously stated, sensory marketing is a powerful strategy for DMOs, once it has been proven that "consumers look for marketing campaigns that dazzle their senses, touch their hearts and stimulate their minds" (Schmitt, 1999, p. 57), looking for tailor-made experiences and replacing the old functional value of products/services for the sensory and emotional added value they offer.

As we will discuss, the body experience is a source of information (Krishna & Schwarz, 2014), teaching us about the environment around us and the corresponding emotions that may arouse during that experience (Pawaskar & Goel, 2014). Therefore, all our mental processes involve sensory stimulation, meaning that the more stimuli we are exposed to, the more likely we are to remember a particular experience (Roopchund Randhir et al., 2016).

Multisensory marketing has the power to create favourable brand associations, communicate and stress certain characteristics of the product that will strengthen the brand's identity (Wiedmann et al., 2018). Hence, this type of marketing is a dynamic tool favouring the creation of "subconscious triggers that define consumer perceptions of abstract notions of the product" (Krishna, 2012, p. 333).

The two dominant stimuli in sensory marketing are the visual and auditory stimuli (Hultén, 2017; Krishna, 2012; Krishna & Schwarz, 2014; Pawaskar & Goel, 2014; Roopchund Randhir et al., 2016), as we collect the first impression with our eyes and extract important messages by hearing and listening (Kuczamer-Klopotoska, 2017). Furthermore, as discussed by Heikkilä, Alho, & Tiippana (2017), when we pair stimuli- mainly visual and auditory- consumers are able to recognize them more accurately than if they would only be exposed to single stimuli. This happens because of semantic congruency, i.e., pairing multisensory (words and sounds) or unisensory (words and pictures) stimuli. This process affects memory, and, in particular, recall - being the former a stronger strategy than the latter - which happens because "different stimulus

enhance our conceptual coding of information, thus enhancing the memory trace" (Heikkilä, Alho, & Tiippana 2017, p. 17).

2.3.1. Visual Stimuli

Vision is the dominant sense (Hultén, 2017), and consumers' perceptions on a brand are significantly based on visual aspects that the eyes capture (Guzel & Dortyol, 2016; Kuczamer-Klopotoska, 2017).

For destinations, pictures and videos are the most attractive forms of communicating the destination distinctive traits to the consumer (Ghosh & Sarkar, 2016; Yozukmaz & Topaloglu, 2016). Ghosh & Sarkar (2016) justify these claims as they prove that destination attractiveness is the ability to fulfil tourists' needs and desires, and it is measured by the core and augmented attributes of that destination, i.e., landscapes, scenery or accommodation. In fact, when marketers use dynamic images, they encourage an increasing activity in somatosensory-motor brain areas (Petit et al., 2019). If exposed to sensory cues on the internet, we activate the cortices corresponding to our senses, which is called perceptual re-enactment. These can serve to fill missing features that are not physically present at the time of exposure. Moreover, consumers can even infer sensory expectations by being exposed to images or sounds (Kuczamer-Klopotoska, 2017).

The human being's visual sense is linked with quality perceptions, since a visually attractive product may induce positive feelings towards the brand (Roopchund Randhir et al., 2016). In turn, exposure to visual stimuli may influence the attractiveness of the destination and possibly induce feelings of attachment, while arousing positive emotions in consumers' minds. Which leads to our first hypothesis:

H1: The visual stimuli in experiential marketing positively influence tourists' emotional arousal.

2.3.2. Auditory Stimuli

The second most important stimuli in destination sensory marketing are the auditory stimuli, as marketing communication is generally auditory in nature (Krishna, 2012a). In fact, “we hear with our ears and listen with our minds” (Kuczamer-Klopotoska, 2017, p. 228), and if used right sounds can trigger distant memories and bring us back to a particular moment. Music has the power to impact our mood, but auditory stimuli are not limited to music, as noises and some particular sounds may induce certain actions and be highly suggestive too (Roopchund Randhir et al., 2016).

To provide an outstanding sound experience and to incorporate it in destination marketing may be a powerful strategy for DMOs. Indeed, certain sounds are intrinsically connected with the other four senses, as they have the ability to induce feelings of touch or the texture of food, for example (Lee, Gretzel, & Law, 2010; Pawaskar & Goel, 2014; Pentz & Gerber, 2013). Specially in online destination promotion, as “auditory features can be used to convey, or accentuate, the sensory features of a product online through semantic congruency” (Petit et al., 2019, p. 52).

When we analyse the communication of well-known brands, we find that several use distinctive sounds, and these sounds or jingles promote brand recall and create a strong imprint on consumers' minds and senses (Pawaskar & Goel, 2014; Skandalis, Byrom, & Banister, 2019). The same could be done in destination marketing, as many countries have traditional music associated to it.

To conclude, auditory stimuli are among the strongest stimuli in sensory marketing. In fact, the music we hear is a mirror of our personality, as we often see music as a way to express ourselves and to create our own personality. Audition is a powerful sense that induces emotions and feelings and triggers memories, which could be used to shape the consumer experience and strengthen the emotional bond with the destination (Hultén, 2017). Hence, we purpose the following hypothesis:

H2: The auditory stimuli in experiential marketing positively influence tourists' emotional arousal.

2.4. Emotion Arousal

When addressing the concept of emotions, one must acknowledge its unique nature and consider the several mechanisms involved in its development (Meiselman, 2016a). Literature review on this field portrays emotions as affective states (Hosany & Prayag, 2013) and multidimensional feelings that reflect the consumer interpretation of his/her relationship with the environment (Achar et al., 2016).

Following the previous chapters, and according to Achar et al. (2016), emotions can be influenced by external stimuli (sensory marketing) or incidental sources (personality traits or past experiences). When exposed to external stimuli, consumers examine and evaluate the captured information on their minds (James, 1884; Meiselman, 2016b), a process which is called appraisal. In fact, advertisements have a compelling power over the human being, given that the he/she feels the urge to act in conformity with that stimuli.

However, there is a misconception regarding the development of emotions: it is the body that follows the perception of its own state, and not otherwise. Therefore, first the sensation emerges and only then will the emotion be aroused (James, 1884), i.e., we don't shiver because we are scared, instead the body recognizes the bodily state and the emotion occurs. It is the information (in form of sensations) that we collected about the environment that triggers certain reactions, and which arouses feelings and emotions (Krishna & Schwarz, 2014). Our body response to the event will inform our limbic system and an emotion will arouse, while brand associations are being formed (Damásio, 2011).

When trying to understand the consumer journey, or in this case the tourist journey, one must recognize that he/she is highly demanding and subject to several changes himself/herself, considering he/she does not follow a linear

path when choosing a destination. Indeed, tourists perception of the destination (destination image) are always changing each time they are exposed to new stimuli or sensory cues (Dițoiu, Stancioiu, Bratucu, Onisor, & Botos, 2014). Accordingly, when there is not enough cognitive information, tourists rely on emotions and brand loyalty as a supplement to their decision-making.

In summary, tourists evaluate their experiences on emotional terms, and trust on those emotions to make most of their decisions (Schmitt, 1999). That is why sensory marketing can help destinations build a competitive advantage (Kim & Perdue 2013): it creates that emotional bond that will hopefully assist in the development of a positive image towards the destination. Consumers need the experience and the resulting emotions to create a bond with the brand (in this case destination), whether it is an actual real experience or a staged marketing one (Schmitt, 1999; Sung et al., 2016).

2.5. Destination Personality

In 1996, Aaker introduced the idea of brand equity and the ten measures companies should use to evaluate and track the brand in comparison with its competitors. Within this ten dimensions, lies brand personality: a sub-set of associations that aim to target the brand as a person by “providing a link to the brands emotional and self-expressive benefits as well as a basis for customer/brand relationships and differentiation.” (Aaker, 1997, p. 112). The author states that brand personality is formed by associations that already exist on the consumer’s mind, which could be a product of the following: (1) previously formed impressions; (2) corporate image; (3) product attributes.

Literature on brand equity and related brand management research usually highlight the concept of brand image over brand personality (Hudson & Ritchie, 2009; Liu, et al. 2017; Mohamad, et al. 2012; Qu et al., 2011). Related to these two concepts, few authors adapted this view to the tourism industry and started to perform some research on the concepts of destination image and

destination personality (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006a; Souiden et al., 2017a) . The difference between these two concepts is that destination image is limited in the sense that it can be rather momentary and not as strong as destination personality, which can remain over time (Souiden et al., 2017a). The created destination image and corresponding personality will translate into a real competitive advantage, proving to be not only a driver of customer loyalty (Aaker, 1997; Su & Reynolds, 2017) but also a way of reducing the customer perceived risk (Qu et al., 2011).

The development of the destination personality requires an increasing attention about the perceptions tourists have of the destination. In fact, DMOs should "elevate the brand from an element in a superficial transactional relationship to an emotional connection with consumers" (Su & Reynolds, 2017, p. 1), in the attempt to not only to meet or exceed the tourist expectations, but to surpass satisfaction and delight them. As previously stated, emotional and symbolic values weight more on the final decision than functional values (Cohen et al., 2014; Pawaskar & Goel, 2014), and destinations are a body of experiences, services and products (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006a; Schmitt, 1999; Stylos et al., 2017), meaning that the destination's personality is created based on a set of aroused emotions.

More than to position destinations to create favourable associations, DMOs should create an image and a unique personality and support it by forming an emotional connection with the tourist. Through the use of multisensory marketing (Wang, Qu, & Yang, 2018), a broad assortment of sensations, feelings and emotions will fill the consumer's mind and heart and a unique bond will be created between him and the destination brand. Indeed, emotional benefits strengthen brand loyalty, and although "emotional branding" (Hultén, 2011, p. 257) applies to all products and services, it makes even more sense when applied to the tourism industry – as such an intangible and perishable product demands for a specific branding and communication.

Overall, destinations are rich in sensations and their personalities translate into unique identities (Pawaskar & Goel, 2014) that are used to infer meaning of

that *product* for the consumer. Therefore, the perceptions tourists have about the destination rely heavily on feelings of attachment and the affective image created towards that particular place (Qu et al., 2011). The emotional benefits stressed in destination promotion, and the feelings that arouse from it, instigate a strong connection between the consumer and the destination and define the destination's personality. In fact, as previously discussed, sensory stimuli help to express the identity of the destination brand, and all feelings resulting from this process will directly impact the tourist experience and shape his/her particular conceptions about the destination, including personality traits associations (Hultén, 2017). Therefore, we purpose the following hypothesis:

H3: Emotional arousal affects the creation of destination personality.

2.6. Behaviour Intentions

Research on tourist behaviour dates back to the emergence of the first books concerning marketing around 1922 (Shaw & Tamilia, 2001). Since then, several authors have been trying to understand the mechanisms behind tourists' choice of a destination (Dalton, et al., 2009; Dann, 1981; Mattila, 2004). Tran & Ralston (2006) define motivation as "an affect or emotion occurring when aroused by a stimulus that exists both on conscious and unconscious levels." (p. 426).

When it comes to decision making, tourists tend to consider different variables, namely destination attributes (affective or sensorial) (Agapito, et al., 2013; Ghosh & Sarkar, 2016; Almeida & Garrod, 2018; Masiero & Qiu, 2018; Ramires, Brandão, & Sousa, 2018) and marketing campaigns that they might have been exposed to (Stylos et al., 2017).

Indeed, DMOs are turning to branding as a way to differentiate destinations and appeal to tourists' attention. As functional attributes are common to most destinations, destination personality became a strong tool of differentiation for destination marketers (Kumar, 2016). Some studies have

proved the power of this strategy (Chi et al., 2018; Hultman et al., 2015) and highlighted how destination personality leads to positive consumer responses.

Following the theory of self-congruency discussed by Kumar (2016), consumers are prone to choose products and services that present the same personality traits as them. Supporting this view, Ekinici & Hosany (2006), on their study about destination personality, argue that consumers will look for products with the personality traits they desire for themselves. In the particular case of destinations, tourists will develop a relationship and feelings of attachment (Iglesias, et al., 2018; Keller, 2013) to a place, if they perceive this place as having a higher emotional valence in comparison to others, i.e., if they significantly identify with this place.

Moreover, “the tourism experience is considered to be unique, emotionally charged, and of high personal relevance and value” (Ekinici & Hosany, 2006, p. 136). This statement supports the idea that consumers tend to choose destinations with different and unique characteristics with which they establish an emotional connection, and, hence, to which they develop strong feelings of place attachment and establish strong, unique and favourable top-of-mind associations (Hultman et al., 2015).

To sum up, the tourist decision-making process is significantly influenced by the emotional connection created with the different places. The personality of a destination will dictate tourists behaviour towards it, as tourists will tend to choose a destination that is consistent with their feelings and emotions (Kim & Stepchenkova, 2017), and with which they feel the most connected with. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: Destination Personality positively influences tourists’ behavioural intentions.

Chapter 3 - Methodology and data sources

3.1. Conceptual Model

Souiden et al. (2017) studied how destination personality is affected by destination image and the extend of its impact on tourist behaviour. However, this study did not cover other relevant variables, such as emotions and sensory stimuli. Moreover, few studies provided insights regarding the sensory dimension of the tourist experience (Dițoiu & Căruntu, 2014; Tasci et al., 2018; Yozukmaz & Topaloglu, 2016), the majority of the previous studies focused on the sensory attributes of the destination (Agapito & Pinto, 2014; Agapito et al., 2014) and not on the emotional state that arouses from the sensory stimuli. To address this gap, the present study introduced emotional arousal and sensory stimuli as antecedents of destination personality.

The conceptual model presented in *Fig.1* is based on the two models presented by Krishna (2012) and Souiden et al. (2017), on their study on destination personality and emotions, which encompass experiential marketing, destination personality and behavioural responses.

The premise of the model stands on the fact that experiential marketing consists of two important variables: sensory stimuli and the resulting emotion arousal *state*. Following Hülten's (2011) work on sensory marketing, this study assumes that the emotions stimulated by the sensory stimuli will instigate the creation of the destination's personality, which will dictate the tourists' behaviour towards the destination.

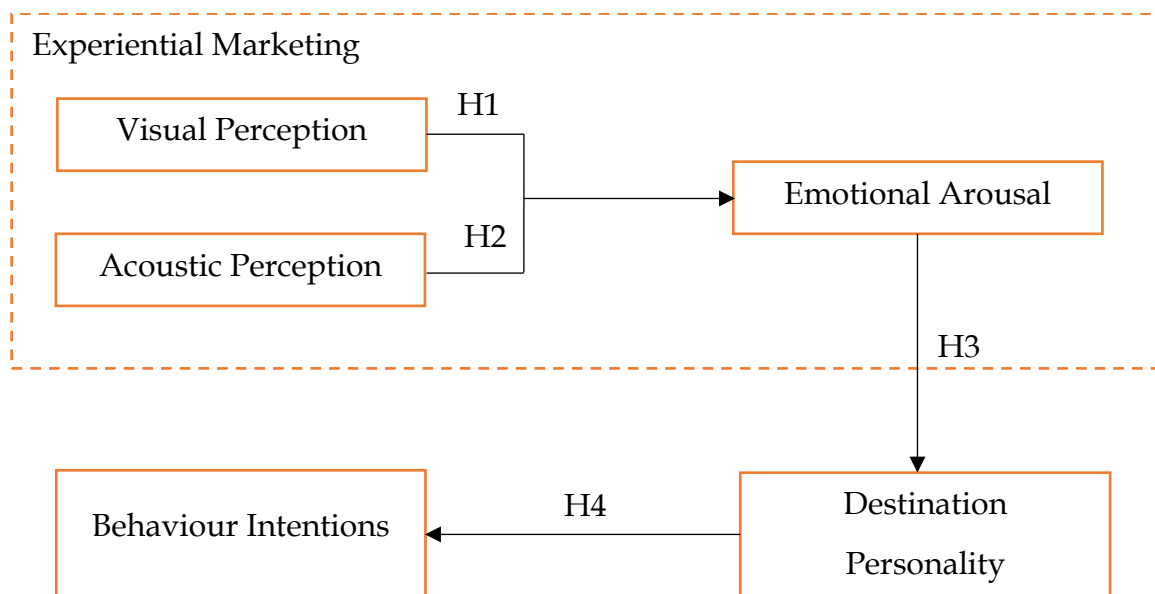
To stimulate emotions, feelings and sensations, marketers should work on the five human senses and create appealing sensory stimuli for their target consumers. In turn, the emotions aroused by the sensory stimuli will create a strong emotional bond between the destination and the consumer (Aro, Suomi, & Saraniemi, 2018). This emotional arousal will influence the building of the destination personality (Qu et al., 2011; Dițoiu, et al., 2014; Hosany & Prayag, 2013), which can affect tourists' behaviour towards the destination. Indeed,

consumers tend to project their desired personality traits on to the brand and look for destinations that resonate with their own personalities too (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006b; Kumar, 2016). Previous research shows that, once the destination brand personality is created, the affective image of a destination tends to remain« stable and instigate positive behavioural intentions (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Lin, 2015; Qu et al., 2011).

In summary, all the variables discussed on this chapter are included in the conceptual framework below. However, for the purpose of the study, only two sensory stimuli were included, which are the two dominant senses in online promotion: vision and audition, given that these are the only senses to be stimulated.

Figure 1

Theoretical Framework



3.2. The study context

In the process of selecting the destination for the present study, a few requirements were outlined, namely the popularity of the destination, as this had to be one destination that most respondents would easily recall or share some values in common with. In fact, Berrozpe et al. (2019) argue that tourists choose

destinations based on the ones they identify with the most, a phenomenon called *brand identification* (p. 241). Consumers always feel compelled by places that resonate more with their own personality and where they feel a sense of belonging (Ekinci et al., 2013), mainly a place which they have a meaningful emotional connection with

Considering that one of the studied variables is destination personality, and that consumers long for symbolic consumption (Belk, et al., 1982), i.e., a *product* that helps them express their identity and personality, the destination that felt most appropriate for this case was Spain. Being the second most popular holiday destination in 2017 and counting with 81.8 million tourists (CNN, 2017), this country is one of the most well-known destinations in the world and one of the favourite choices among millennials (CNBC, 2018).

Following this thought, a research was conducted to find a video that embodied the sensory dimension of the tourist experience, as well as one that was appealing to the consumer's senses and emotions. The duration of the video was a decisive factor too, given that the attention span of respondents in such tasks is very brief. Therefore, the chosen video counted with forty-five seconds and with highly sensory elements being constantly communicated to the viewer. The link of the video can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2MuDShXtMw>

3.3. Questionnaire and measurement scales

The questionnaire was developed using existing measurement scales developed by several authors. The process of choosing these scales relied upon two important criteria: validity of the scale, meaning, if it was used more than one time by different authors; and accuracy of the scale, i.e., if it was able to measure the variable for this specific study. These were adapted to fit the purpose of this research and according to variables under study. The questionnaire was

divided into four parts: (1) Sensory Stimuli; (2) Emotional arousal; (3) Destination Personality; (4) Behavioural Intentions; (5) and demographic information.

In the last part of the questionnaire, a few demographic questions were asked to respondents. These were items used by Wu, (2016): Nationality; Gender; Level of Education (High School or Less; University (still undergraduate, graduate or higher); Age; Visitation Level (one time, two times, three or more times).

To collect data, an online survey using Google Forms platform was created, and further distributed on Facebook. Some groups (with survey sharing purposes) were selected so a diverse sample of respondents could be achieved. Therefore, and to ensure that it would reach a wide target, the questionnaire was shared in two languages: Portuguese and English. Some items, had to be adapted and slightly altered to accommodate Portuguese language specificities, maintaining, however, the essence of the item and the scale. In the next section, the items and corresponding scales are exposed.¹

Table 1

Variables and Measurement Scales

Constructs	Items	References
Visual Stimuli	The sights shown in the video are aesthetic (VS ₁)	Haase & Wiedmann (2018)
	The sights shown in the video are attractive (VS ₂)	
	The sights shown in the video are beautiful (VS ₃)	
	The sights shown in the video are pretty (VS ₄)	
Auditory Stimuli	The sounds heard in the video are harmonious (AS ₁)	Haase & Wiedmann (2018)
	The sounds heard in the video are appeasing (AS ₂)	

¹ The translation to Portuguese can be found on **Appendix 1**.

Constructs	Items	References
	The sounds heard in the video are melodic (AS ₃) The sounds heard in the video are intense (AS ₄)	
Emotional Arousal (Positive Surprise)	I feel fascinated after watching this video (EA ₁) I feel a sense of inspiration after watching this video (EA ₂) I feel a sense of surprise after watching this video (EA ₃) I feel a sense of astonishment after watching this video (EA ₄) I feel a sense of amazement after watching this video (EA ₅)	Prayag, Hosany, & Odeh (2013)
Destination Personality	Spain is authentic (DP ₁) Spain is conservative (DP ₂) Spain is luxurious (DP ₃) Spain is modern (DP ₄) Spain is warming (DP ₅) Spain is charming (DP ₆) Spain is appealing (DP ₇) Spain is up-to-date (DP ₈) Spain is fascinating (DP ₉) Spain is reliable (DP ₁₀) Spain is unique (DP ₁₁) Spain is friendly (DP ₁₂) Spain is leader (DP ₁₃) Spain is trust-worthy (DP ₁₄)	Soudien et al. (2017)
Behavioural Intentions (Destination Loyalty)	I will say positive things about Spain to other people (BI ₁) I would recommend Spain to friends and relatives as a holiday destination (BI ₂) I believe I will visit Spain in the future (BI ₃)	(Wu, 2016)

Constructs	Items	References
	Spain is now among my first choices of destinations to visit (BI4)	

3.3.1. Visual and acoustic perceptions

In order to measure visual and acoustic perceptions, we used the SPI (Sensory Perception Item Scale), developed by Haase & Wiedmann (2018), using a five-point Likert scales (1= strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). The authors performed an extensive research to create a holistic scale that could measure customer's perception of each five sensory stimuli. However, we have used just part of that scale, given that only two of the five senses are relevant in this case: visual and acoustic. Since respondents would be watching a video, it seemed only appropriate to include the senses that relate to the stimuli they will experience.

In the SPI, each of these sensory dimensions are measured using four items. In this study, instead of using only single words (see table 1) to describe the visual and acoustic stimuli, we used full sentences to provide a context and facilitate respondent's interpretation of the adjectives. The question of the first section in the survey was as follows:

"After watching the video, please consider the following statements regarding your perceptions in respect to the visual and acoustic stimuli presented in the video. Rank between 1 to 5, in which 1 means strongly disagree, and 5 strongly agree:

The items used to measure the visual stimuli presented in the video were based on the four adjectives used by the authors (**aesthetic, attractive, beautiful, pretty**). However, sentences were created to facilitate respondents reading interpretation (refer to table 1).

For the acoustic stimuli, the method was similar but three of the authors' items (**euphonic, good-sounding, melodic, sonorous**) were substituted by a

synonym because the closest words in Portuguese are sporadically used by the general population. These adjustments were placed to prevent misinterpretations of the adjectives. As can be seen in *table 1*, euphonic was substituted by harmonious, good-sounding by appeasing, melodic remained, and sonorous by intense.,

3.3.2. Emotional Arousal

The second variable, emotional arousal, was measured according to a scale developed by Prayag, Hosany, & Odeh (2013). As previously discussed, emotional arousal has not been a recurring subject on tourism field; and although brand equity has received some attention from researchers (Huang & Cai, 2015; Iglesias et al. 2019b; Lin, 2015), the role emotions play in the tourist experience lacks empirical research. Once the consumer experience was previously taken as a purely rational one, focusing only on the functional benefits of the product, recent studies have been stressing the importance of the experience economy and the fact that consumers perceive the emotional and affective values over reasoning. Therefore, when facing multiple choice options, consumers will always recall to past experiences (personal or online) to make their final choice.

With this being said, and after careful consideration on measurement scales regarding emotional arousal, it seemed adequate to use a scale originally developed by Prayag, Hosany, & Odeh (2013), referred as *Positive Surprise Scale*, and adapted by Hosany & Gilbert (2010), who called it *Destination Emotion Scale (DES)*.

The measurement scale is composed of five items related to the emotions aroused by the sensory stimuli viewers are exposed to, when watching the promotional video of Spain. The question that was asked for respondents to answer was as follows: *“Now, please consider the following statements regarding emotions or feelings that might have been aroused after watching the video. Rank between 1 to 5, in which 1 means strongly disagree, and 5 strongly agree.”*

3.3.3. Destination personality

As previously mentioned, according to Aaker (1997), brand personality is as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). Since then, the tourism field has adopted the concept to its own use, creating the idea of *destination personality* (Chi, Pan, & Del Chiappa, 2018a; Souiden et al., 2017a).

Following careful research on this variable, the scale developed by Souiden et al. (2017) was elected as the best measure of the concept of destination personality. On their study, the Souiden et al. (2017) analysed all relevant studies and scales used to date and agreed that the best items to measure destination personality would be fourteen (see table 1) of the forty-two first presented by Aaker (1997). The original forty-two item scale was proven to not be indicated for tourism studies, given its length.

However, one of the items was adapted for the purpose of this study. As Souiden et al.'s (2017) research was focused on Dubai, and this item meaning did not apply in the same way to Spain. Hence, upper-class was substituted by luxurious in the present study. The scale was measured using a five-point Likert scales (1= strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree).

Therefore, the questions that was asked in the survey was: “Now, please consider the following statements regarding ***the way you now see Spain***. Rank between 1 to 5, in which 1 means strongly disagree, and 5 strongly agree.”. This question was to induce the respondent’s memory regarding the sensory video they watched in the beginning, given that the objective was to capture the formed personality of destination that was created based on the emotions that aroused after the offered stimuli.

3.3.4. Behaviour intentions

The last variable in study was measured using the scale used by Wu (2016) of *destination loyalty*. The author purpose was to study tourists' behaviour towards destinations, more specifically, destination loyalty. This is a frequently used variable in tourism studies as outcomes of previous relationships between other constructs.

We found that most authors study causal relationships while concentrating on past experiences, i.e., an experience that already took place in the past. This, as one can see, does not comply with the premise of this study, which is to analyse if the destination's personality has a direct impact on future purchase behaviours. Therefore, the scale to be used needed to be able to measure this state regarding an experience that did not happen yet. Thus, the scale chosen for destination loyalty measures future potential behaviours regarding the destination.

The question asked to respondents was: *"Lastly, please consider the following statements regarding **future behaviours you might engage in**. Rank between 1 to 5, in which 1 means strongly disagree, and 5 strongly agree."* The four items of the scale aimed to understand if a relationship or an emotional bond was created with the destination after the experience respondents had on the beginning when watching the video.

3.4. Data Collection and Sample

The method for data collection, as previously mentioned, was an online survey shared through Facebook, with the objective to collect a wide sample. There were 199 collected responses, without missing values – given that all questions in the survey were mandatory. The survey was conducted between January and February of 2019. Respondents were asked to watch a 45 second video in order to answer some questions that followed. The survey was to be

filled individually and anyone could have access to the survey and complete it without any restraint.

Table 1
Demographic Profiles (N= 199)

Variables	%
Gender	
Female	78.4
Male	21.6
Nationality	
Portuguese	73.9
Foreign (Russian, German, Spanish, Turkish, Ukrainian, British, Zambian, Bruneian, American, Chinese, Croatian, Polish, Italian, Romanian, Dutch)	26.1
Education	
High school degree or less	12.1
Bachelor's degree (in progress)	26.6
Bachelor's degree or higher degrees	61.3
Age	
20 years or less	8.0
21 – 30	56.3
31 – 40	18.1
41 – 50	14.6
60 or more	3.0
Frequency of visits to the destination Spain	
None	9.0
Once	10.6
Twice	6.5
Three or more times	73.9

As demonstrated by table 2, the sample was constituted by 78.4% female, 21.6% male and 73.9% Portuguese. Moreover, the majority of respondents possessed a higher education (with completed bachelor's degree or higher) and

they were mostly between the ages of 21 and 30 years old. Regarding the travel frequency, 73.9% of respondents had already visited Spain three or more times, which might indicate that they had an already created image of the country.

Chapter 4 - Results

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

The principal objective of the present study was to investigate the role of experiential marketing in the perceived destination's personality, through the mediation of emotional arousal, and its further impact on future behavioural intentions. In order to prove the stated hypothesis, two statistical programs were used: IBM SPSS and AMOS.

The first step of the data analysis was to calculate the average score and standard deviation of each item (table 3). Considering that all responses follow a five-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree), we can note that most items are rated close to the central value, counting with six items to lie below three points: I feel a sense of surprise after watching this video (EA3); I feel a sense of astonishment after watching this video (EA4); I feel a sense of amazement after watching this video (EA5); Spain is conservative (DP2); Spain is luxurious (DP3); Spain is a leader (DP13). The highest score is for BI3 (I believe I will visit Spain in the future), and the lowest for EA4 (I feel a sense of astonishment after watching this video).

Table 2
Descriptive Measures

Variable	Item	Average	Standard Deviation
Visual Stimuli	VS ₁	4.11	0.907
	VS ₂	4.00	0.964
	VS ₃	3.71	1.018
	VS ₄	4.01	0.92
Auditory Stimuli	AS ₁	3.97	1.007

	AS ₂	3.90	1.044
	AS ₃	3.82	1.051
	AS ₄	3.39	1.166
Emotional Arousal	EA ₁	3.14	0.995
	EA ₂	3.21	1.165
	EA ₃	2.79	1.117
	EA ₄	2.79	1.065
	EA ₅	2.91	1.074
Destination personality	DP ₁	3.62	1.037
	DP ₂	2.86	0.985
	DP ₃	2.98	0.990
	DP ₄	3.38	1.007
	DP ₅	3.64	0.995
	DP ₆	3.70	0.990
	DP ₇	3.73	1.037
	DP ₈	3.25	1.002
	DP ₉	3.42	1.069
	DP ₁₀	3.23	1.027
	DP ₁₁	3.24	1.228
	DP ₁₂	3.48	1.058
	DP ₁₃	2.93	0.990
	DP ₁₄	3.29	1.0130
Behavioural intentions	BI ₁	3.89	0.901

BI ₂	3.91	0.963
BI ₃	4.17	1.019
BI ₄	3.03	1.195

4.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The second step on analysing the collected data, was to perform an exploratory factor analysis on all variables, and especially if to understand if there were different dimensions present in the variable Destination Personality as demonstrated by Souiden et al. (2017). Therefore, using Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation, all 14 items of Destination Personality were included.

In table 4, we can find the final results of this analysis, namely the eigenvalues, the percentage of explained variance (unrotated and rotated), as well as the Cronbach's Alfa for each factor.

In the Communalities column, we can observe that all factors seem to fit the factor solution. However, when looking at the rotated factors, we can identify that all included items but "Up-to-date" are highly correlated with factor 1. Items for factor 2 include the "Up-to-date" and "Modern" variable, considering the high factor loadings. When interpreting these values, it appears that factor one relates to the emotional and affective dimension of Destination Personality and that factor 2 represents the modernity dimension of Destination Personality. Furthermore, considering that rotated factor 3 only presents one item, this was not included in the further analysis.

Lastly, Cronbach's Alfa values of the affective and the modernity dimensions, both above 0.7, indicate an appropriate level of scale reliability. (Iglesias et al. 2019).

Table 3

Final Constructs of Destination Personality

Items	Communalities	Rotated Factor 1	Rotated Factor 2	Rotated Factor 3
Spain is... [Appealing]	0.684	0.805	0.422	
Spain is... [Charming]	0.996	0.802	0.390	
Spain is... [Fascinating]	0.890	0.805	0.379	
Spain is... [Friendly]	0.815	0.718	0.382	
Spain is... [Authentic]	0.843	0.779		
Spain is... [Up-to-date]	0.782	0.482	0.741	
Spain is... [Unique]	0.727	0.837		
Spain is... [Modern.]	0.803		0.897	
Spain is... [Conservative]	0.678			0.979
Eigenvalue		5.633	0.889	0.697
Percentage of explained variance		62.591 %	9.879 %	7.740 %
Percentage of explained variance (rotated)		45.518 %	22.851 %	11.841 %
Cronbach's Alfa		0.930	0.804	

The next step was to assess the Cronbach's Alfa of all of the remaining constructs under study: Visual Stimuli, Auditory Stimuli, Emotional Arousal and Behavioural Intentions. On table 5, these values are presented, on which we can observe that the Cronbach's Alfa is superior to the reference value of 0.7, which confirms the reliability of the measures. Lastly, the means of each construct was calculated in order to conduct the analysis on AMOS. For that, total scores were computed by averaging the items of each scale.

Table 5**Reliability of Variable Constructs**

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alfa	Mean
Visual Stimuli	4	0.924	4.0
Auditory Stimuli	4	0.827	3.8
Emotional Arousal	5	0.912	3.0
Destination Personality 1 (<i>Affective Personality</i>)	6	0.930	3.5
Destination Personality 2 (<i>Modern Personality</i>)	2	0.804	3.3
Behavioral intentions	4	0.865	3.8

4.3. Regression Analysis on AMOS

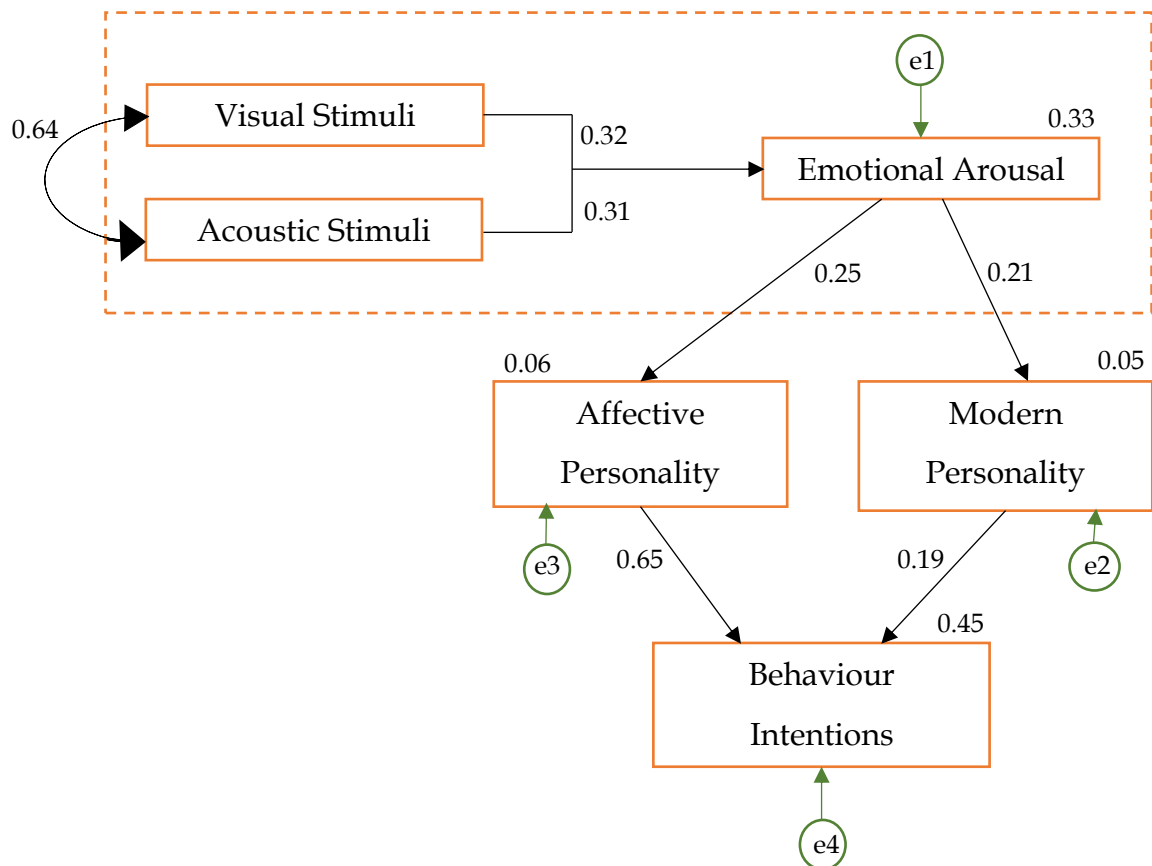
The final step on the present's study data analysis was to test the path model using AMOS software, a programme that allows users to test multiple regression equations simultaneously, as to confirm all the previously purposed hypothesis. Considering the suggestion minimum sample number by Hair et al. (2010), it can be confirmed that with the five latent constructs (and given that each had more than three items), a minimum of 100 responses were needed to use the structural equation modelling (SEM), which is in conformity with the 199 collected ones.

The obtained model can be found below along with a table with the standardized coefficients. The numbers next to the variables indicate the r-squared each dependent variable. All the dependent variables have residual errors - the unobservable variables that are not explained by the regression model - while the exogenous variables (independent) do not have residuals, which are in this case Visual Stimuli and Acoustic Stimuli.

Figure 2 represents the theoretical framework previously discussed in this study and all the variables under study. Emotional Arousal is presented a mediator between the Visual and Acoustic stimuli and the two Personality dimensions, as it has an indirect effect of these stimuli in the creation of these types of Personalities.

Analysing the model below, we can find that the coefficient of determination is 0.33 for Emotional Arousal and 0.45 for Behavioural Intentions. Hence, 33% of the variance in Emotional Arousal is explained by the independent variables of the model, which are the Visual and Acoustic Stimuli. The same stands for Behavioural Intentions, where 45% of its variance is explained by Affective and Modern Personality. However, the r-squared for both personality dimensions is closer to zero than it was for the previous variables, yielding that only 6% and 5%, respectively, of the variance in Affective Personality and in Modern Personality is explained by Emotional Arousal.

Figure 2 - SEM Results



Moreover, on table 8, the standardized estimated regression weights, standard errors and critical values (which is the estimate divided by the standardized error) are presented, along with the p values and the r-squared. The parameter estimate is significant at $p \leq 0.05$ (corresponding to a value of C.R > 1.96). The three asterisks indicate values below 0.001.

Looking at the regression weights and p values, all the establishes hypotheses were empirically confirmed:

H1: The visual stimuli in experiential marketing positively influence tourists' emotional arousal.

H2: The auditory stimuli in experiential marketing positively influence tourists' emotional arousal.

H3: Emotional arousal affects the creation of destination personality.

H4: Destination Personality influences tourists' behavioural intentions.

Regarding the other remaining p values, all lie under 0.05 as according to Hu and Bentler (1999), which confirm all remaining hypothesis. Hence, it is confirmed that emotional arousal influences the creation of affective and modern personality positively, and that the affective personality has a positive impact too on the predicament of behavioural intentions. However, the second dimension of the destination's personality (modern personality) shows a negative impact on the tourists' behavioural intention, yielding that the destination's affective personality is the only dimension that influences behavioural intentions. Looking at table 8, we found that Modern Personality increases 1-unit, Behavioural Intentions decrease in 0.195 units.

Table 6

P Values and Variables

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	R ²²
Visual Stimuli	→	Emotional Arousal	0.342	0.083	4,144	***	0.325
Acoustic Stimuli	→	Emotional Arousal	0.338	0.082	4,124	***	
Emotional Arousal	→	Affective Personality	0.249	0.068	3,663	***	0.063
Emotional Arousal	→	Modern Personality	0.210	0.068	3,064	0.002	0.045
Modern Personality	→	Behavioural Intentions	-0.195	0.054	-3,578	***	0.448
Affective Personality	→	Behavioural Intentions	0.668	0.054	12,341	***	

4.4. Discussion and Implications

The results of this study demonstrate that destination personality is created by the exposure to sensory stimuli and by the emotions aroused from that exposure, all contributing to future behavioural intentions regarding the particular destination (Hultman et al., 2015; Souiden et al., 2017a).

All the independent variables appear to be reliable and significant predictors of the dependent variables. Affective Personality dimension, in accordance with previous literature on brand personality (Chi et al., 2018b; Ekinci & Hosany, 2006b; Souiden et al., 2017a), has a strong positive impact on behavioural intentions, explaining the majority of its variance. Nonetheless, when it comes to the dimension of Modern Personality, the impact is significant, but negative. This finding has never been reported in previous studies, on brand

² The presented R² applies only to the dependent variables (emotional arousal, affective personality, modern personality and behavioural intentions)

personality and destination personality, which suggests that additional studies should be conducted on this matter. However, we may raise some possible justifications for this result.

These findings are in conformity with the theory of self-congruity (Kumar, 2016), which suggest that consumers are prone to choose products and services with the same personality. Hence, considering that respondents were mainly millennials, one needs to acknowledge that this market segment value more the affective and emotional side of experiences than the functional benefits (Forbes, 2018), proving that the collected sample's behavioural response is more affected by the affective personality of destinations than by its modern personality. Indeed, modernity appears to be a secondary characteristic that leads to behavioural intentions, as Spain shows more important traits that tourists value most, such as the affective personality traits found in this study. Moreover, being a country with a strong history and cultural background, this is a destination that is displaced among other modern destinations, such as Dubai or the United States, leading to the preference for affective and emotional traits and not exactly modernity.

Despite this controversial finding, it is important to highlight the results regarding the emotional arousal construct too. As in accordance with literature on psychology (Glazer, 2018; MacInnis & Folkes, 2010; Meiselman, 2016b; Thomson, Crocker, & Marketo, 2010), this study proves that emotional arousal affects the creation of destination personality. However, the coefficient of determination showed that variance on both personalities is only partially explained by emotional arousal, yielding that this subject requires more research and empirical evidence to bring more support to the previously stated hypothesis. Moreover, looking at the demographic variables collected, one can see that most of the respondents had already visited Spain 3 or more times. A fact conveys that, probably, most of the collected sample may have had already preconceived images and pre-formed personalities of the country, and not be aroused by the sensory video chosen. Hence distorting the present results.

On the other hand, the visual and acoustic stimuli are proven to be influence the emotions of tourists, which is supported by existing literature on this subject (Jamaluddin et al., 2013; Spence, 2019; Yozukmaz & Topaloglu, 2016) stating that our emotions are built on the basis of our knowledge and sensory impressions of the world and our surrounding environment.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Limitations

The present study aimed to understand the role of experiential marketing in the creation of perceived destination personality and how this form of marketing impacts consumers' behavioural intentions. To address these research questions, four hypotheses were purposed as well as four different variables: visual stimuli, acoustic stimuli, emotional arousal, destination personality and behavioural intentions. Therefore, following the previously demonstrated findings, the four hypotheses were confirmed, a fact that is in conformity with literature on tourism studies (Agapito, Mendes, & Valle, 2013; Agapito et al., 2012; Almeida & Garrod, 2018; D. Kim & Park, 2017; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Moreover, this study brought some new insights on the emotional *versus* functional valence of destination's personality.

The main objective of this study was to bring a new highlight on studies to date, with the introduction of emotional arousal as a mediator between sensory stimuli and destination personality. The results of this study are in accordance with other author's results (Rupini & Nandagopal, 2015; Schmitt, 1999; Thomson et al., 2010), proving that emotional arousal is an achieved state through the exposure of sensory stimuli, considering that tourists are sensitive and affective beings that look for meaningful experiences, wanting to form emotional connections with brands.

The present study follows the logic behind Hultén's (2009) study on tourist experience, where the author believes that emotional and symbolic values weight more in the final decision than functional values do. A fact that is due to the experience economy we are living in today. When consumers are exposed to sensory cues and are presented with high sensory experiences, those same experiences become memorable ones and a special and strong bond is created with brands. In this case, this dynamic process is applied to the tourism field. In fact, following this study's findings, it is proven that consumers, and mainly millennials, value more the affective personality of destinations than their functional values (Kumar, 2016).

Emotional bonds are the ground for destination loyalty and for tourists' satisfaction. Indeed, the traits that remain in one's memory are the affective and emotional ones. However, emotional arousal is a state that is only induced by sensory experiences, where the service provider engages the consumer's senses and aims to surpass simple satisfaction and delight. In turn, consumers feel their "minds and senses challenged" (Hülten, 2011, p. 258) and begin to create an emotional connection with the brand, or in this case, destination.

The essence of sensory marketing is to communicate the brand's value and image through a more profound way (Krishna, 2012b; Pentz & Gerber, 2013) – by using the five human's senses, thus conveying a more profound meaning to the product or service being sold and creating a memorable experience (J. H. Kim, 2014), where the challenge lies into transforming an impersonal brand experience into a meaningful one.

Notwithstanding the previous findings, this study presents some limitations. Firstly, the collected sample was in a not controlled environment, which cannot confirm if respondents did in fact watched the presented video in the survey. Furthermore, due to time constraints, the analysis of the results was not in-depth, as other relations between not included variables, as well as pre-survey tests should be run in order to analyse respondent's reaction to sensory stimuli regarding different destinations.

On the other hand, most of the collected sample had already been three or more times to Spain, which may deviate their true perception of the country, given that they already had a formed image of the destination. In fact, further researches should aim to analyse individuals' responses regarding destinations they have never visited. As by applying this criterion to future studies, errors and misleading perceptions may be avoided, which will benefit further findings.

In summary, this study's objective was concluded, as the role of experiential marketing was proved to affect destination's personality formation through the mediating role of emotional arousal. The presented findings should contribute to Destination Marketing Organizations, mainly, to service providers in Spain. In conformity with existing literature, the present dissertation

contributed to tourism studies, particularly on the study of emotional arousal. Lastly, it is important to focus more on experiences and the emotional valence and value of products as consumers are changing along with time, and so does their preferences and desires. Millennials long for meaningful and memorable experiences and brands should find a way to their heart.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 – Translation of the online survey in Portuguese

Depois de ver o vídeo, considere as seguintes informações relativas aos estímulos visuais e auditivos que experienciou. Classifique as seguintes afirmações numa escala de 1 a 5. Em que 1: Concordo Totalmente e 5: Discordo Totalmente.

1. As paisagens e cenários mostrados durante o vídeo são esteticamente agradáveis.
2. As paisagens e cenários mostrados durante o vídeo são cativantes.
3. As paisagens e cenários mostrados durante o vídeo são deslumbrantes.
4. As paisagens e cenários mostrados durante o vídeo são bonitos.
5. Os sons que foram ouvidos no vídeo são harmoniosos.
6. Os sons que foram ouvidos no vídeo são agradáveis.
7. Os sons que foram ouvidos no vídeo são melodiosos.
8. Os sons que foram ouvidos no vídeo são expressivos/intensos.

Considere agora os sentimentos e emoções que o vídeo possa ter despertado. Classifique as seguintes afirmações numa escala de 1 a 5. Em que 1: Concordo Totalmente e 5: Discordo Totalmente.

9. Sinto-me fascinado(a) por este vídeo.
10. Sinto-me inspirado(a) por este vídeo.
11. Fiquei surpreendido(a) com este vídeo.
12. Fiquei impressionado(a) com vídeo.
13. Fiquei espantado(a) com este vídeo.

Agora, por favor considere as seguintes questões sobre a forma como vê agora Espanha e a sua respetiva personalidade, enquanto país. Classifique as seguintes afirmações numa escala de 1 a 5. Em que 1: Concordo Totalmente e 5: Discordo Totalmente.

14. Espanha é um país... [Autêntico]
 14. Espanha é um país... [Conservador]
 14. Espanha é um país... [Luxuoso]
 14. Espanha é um país... [Moderno]
 14. Espanha é um país... [Acolhedor]
-

- 14. Espanha é um país... [Encantador]
- 14. Espanha é um país... [Apelativo]
- 14. Espanha é um país... [Inovador/ Vanguardista]
- 14. Espanha é um país... [Fascinante]
- 14. Espanha é um país... [Fiável]
- 14. Espanha é um país... [Único]
- 14. Espanha é um país... [Amigável]
- 14. Espanha é um país... [Pioneiro]
- 14. Espanha é um país... [Um Local de Confiança]

Por último, considere as seguintes afirmações relativas a visitas e comportamentos futuros que possa ter para com Espanha. Classifique as seguintes afirmações numa escala de 1 a 5. Em que 1: Concordo Totalmente e 5: Discordo Totalmente.

- 15. Vou dizer coisas positivas sobre Espanha.
- 16. Vou recomendar Espanha a amigos e familiares como um destino de férias para visitar.
- 17. Acredito que irei visitar Espanha no Futuro.
- 18. Espanha está agora dentro das minhas primeiras escolhas relativamente a sítios a visitar.

Agradecia que respondesse a estas últimas questões de carácter demográfico.

- 19. Qual o seu género? (Feminino, Masculino, Outro, Prefiro não responder)
- 20. Qual a sua nacionalidade? (Portuguesa, Americana, Britânico, Espanhola, Francesa, Alemã, Outro)
- 21. Qual o seu nível de escolaridade? (Secundário ou inferior; Licenciatura (ainda por terminar); Licenciado ou superior)
- 22. Qual a faixa etária a que pertence? (Até aos 20 anos (inclusive); 21- 30; 31- 40; 41- 50; 51- 60; 60 anos ou mais)
- 23. Quantas vezes já visitou Espanha? (Nenhuma vez; Uma vez; Duas vezes; Três ou mais vezes).